



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 14, 1977

MEMORANDUM

To: M - Mr. Ben H. Read  
From: HA - Patt Derian  
Subject: Reorganization Actions

In keeping with the President's policy to make human rights a central element of our foreign policy, a series of internal and inter-agency actions have been taken.

First, the Administration supported legislative changes in the statutory levels of the office by upgrading the Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to the level of Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

Second, the Department, in keeping with the legislative action contained within P.L. 95-105, has upgraded the former office of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to a Bureau, giving it independent status outside the office of the Deputy Secretary. The bureau is comprised of three divisions; the Office of Human Rights, the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs and a separate section responsible for POWS/MIAS.

Third, a considerable increase in staff for the human rights office has been provided to reflect the increased attention to this area of policy by the Administration. In addition, the new reporting requirements of P.L. 95-86 and P.L. 95-88, the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1977, also have required staff increases. Currently, six human rights officers assist the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights in this field.

Fourth, the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs has worked to develop the Inter-Agency Committee on Human Rights and Economic Assistance, created by the Administration to insure adequate consideration of human rights factors in our decision-making in the economic sphere. The Bureau operates as a secretariat for the Committee and the Assistant Secretary is a member of this Committee.

Fifth, a similar entity, the Arms Export Control Board was formed to consider all aspects of the Administration's arms transfer policy, including its relationship to human rights considerations. The Assistant Secretary serves as a member both of the inter-agency Arms Export Control Board and of all of its relevant working groups. The Bureau also has a special responsibility to advise the Secretary with regard to the human rights aspects of security assistance decisions.

Sixth, the designation of fulltime human rights officers within each Bureau was particularly important in providing greater liaison with the operational side of the Department, permitting more effective policy guidance from HA to be offered to other Bureaus.

Seventh, the Department conferred on all Ambassadors a personal responsibility for assuring full information and communication on human rights matters and also directed the designation of appropriate persons to be responsible for human rights reporting within each embassy. This has permitted an improvement in the level and quality of information.

The clear objectives of these actions are to insure that human rights becomes a higher priority in the internal decision-making of the Department and by the Administration as a whole. The vastly expanded emphasis by this Administration on this issue, the added legislative requirements, and the recognition of the imbalance between its responsibilities and its previous organizational character all combined to require the recent reorganization.

With the organizational change, these responsibilities can be undertaken more effectively. The upgrading also responds to recommendations from public and from non-governmental entities for the strengthening of the human rights role within the Department. At the same time, the formal designation of the Bureau has both permitted a clearer delineation of the distinct functions of the Offices of Human Rights and Refugee and Migration Affairs, headed by deputy assistant secretaries, while concurrently enhancing their cooperation and mutual reinforcement. This has been particularly important when the interrelationship of human rights factors and refugee affairs has been emphasized by events in Indochina, in Southern Africa and in the Southern Cone of the western hemisphere.

Clearancé: HA/ORM - Mr. Carlin

HA/HR:MLSchneider:nd:10/14/77